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STATINTL

FOR RELEASE FOR SUNDAY MORNING PAPERS, SEPTEMBER 17, 1961

TEXT OF THE ADDRESS BY GENERAL
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, AT TESTIMONIAL
DINNER FOR SENATOR EVERETT DIRKSEN,
IN CHICAGO, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1961.

CHAIRMAN INGERSOLL, SENATOR DIRKSEN, AND FRIENDS --

This morning I left my farm in Gettysburg and journeyed some hundreds of miles to join you tonight, for one compelling reason. It is identical with the one that has brought you here. We like, and we respect, Senator Everett Dirksen, and we gather here to thank him again for his tireless service to us and to our nation.

Particularly, we honor him for the courage, intelligence and firmness in which he has calmly played his important part in the threatening world scene.

We know that living today in Chicago is akin to living today in Berlin. Every free people, on every continent, are in effect the people of Berlin. Like them, we are face to face with threat of Communist domination. We share the responsibility for preserving, against that threat, all that we hold dear in this world.

Looming in the background is a grim reality. Nuclear-tipped missiles place all of us -- even in Chicago -- but 30 minutes from Armageddon -- tonight, every night, every hour of every day. There is no spot on earth assured of safety from obliteration. The maximum warning time is measured in minutes.

Friend and foe possess, for the first time in history, the capability of mutual annihilation. In such a period each one of us -- and this includes our leaders -- is being tested on the firmness of his faith, the stoutness of his heart, the steadfastness of his courage.

Americans have always been confident that, in time of international crisis, their leadership would hold to principle, would never yield to threat or take a backward step -- a leadership always ready to defend the rights, uphold the ideals, and meet the responsibilities of this free Republic. In this confidence we Americans are determined that where the Commander-in-Chief stands, there we must and shall stand.

I realize these are gloomy words to utter on this, a gala evening, where we are met to honor a great American.

Yet, we know this is not a time to measure lightly either our own present, or our children's tomorrow. In such a time silence is not necessarily either golden or prudent.

By no means are we failing to support national leaders when we recall recent events disturbing to us all.

How could we fail to be sorely distressed over Laos, and more especially over Cuba, and the seeming indecision and uncertainty that characterized governmental action there.

We have been troubled over quasi-official pronouncements implying basic policy changes respecting Communist China and Outer Mongolia.

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We have been concerned by unrebuked criticisms of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and our intelligence gathering agency. We have been puzzled and chagrined by

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expressed doubts as to the allegiance to American ideals of the officer corps of the armed forces.

Personally I have a profound faith in the capacity and readiness of our men in uniform to provide for us the maximum in security.

And I ask you not to misinterpret these expressions of uneasiness about matters of the past. None is mentioned in a spirit of destructive partisanship or of carping criticism. My object, indeed, is exactly the opposite. For though we may have, and may continue to have, misgivings, all of us are, without men in uniform, standing guard tonight in Berlin. No matter what our reservations, the President has our unstinting support as he employs all his will and wisdom against those in the world who scoff at freedom and regard humanity with contempt.

There is no doubt as to the immensity of our nation's power, both economic and military. It is unmatched. And as we look out across both our oceans, we do so as a single people -- united in our determination to keep our nation strong and our devotion to liberty and justice unmistakably clear, every place in the world. That strength stands as a warning beacon to any would-be aggressor; it provides also a firm platform from which we patiently and earnestly seek a peaceful and just solution to world problems.

To preserve that strength is the common and continuous responsibility of all of us. This is why we look anxiously inward to the domestic pillars -- the spiritual, economic and military supports -- of our national power. For well we know that our spiritual and economic health are as essential to our security and national purposes as are the most awesome instruments of war.

To make sure of their vitality is a compelling national duty.

Our spiritual strength is found in a re-kindled dedication to the noble purposes set forth in our founding documents. Steadfast support of the concepts of justice, individual liberty and human dignity is as vital to our security today as are all of the destructive bombs deployed across our country and in bases abroad.

And here may I observe, particularly, that it would be fatal if America's spirit of confidence and of dedication should ever give way to despair and fear. Do we not remember that, as each of our pioneering forebears, ploughing his field, had to carry always a defensive musket, yet he persisted in raising his family and finding happiness in his freedom. So it is today; over our shoulders and around us we see the dangers of our existence, but we must steadfastly refuse to abandon those priceless rights guaranteed to us on July 4, 1776 -- one of the most important of which was, the pursuit of happiness. And that pursuit remains just as important in time of crisis as it does in what has been called the "humdrum" days and years of peace.

Our material strength rests on a free competitive enterprise, generating a steadily expanding economy measured always in a stable and respected currency, worth next month, next year, next decade what it is worth tonight.

That is why I have in these times so gravely viewed unnecessary Federal spending. It weakens power and confidence abroad.

At the very least might we not defer buying tickets for a trip to the moon until we can pay cash for the ride; and do so without mortgaging the old homestead to repair a leaky room. Addiction to a soft-headed philosophy that Federal money can cure every national ill could undermine one of the greatest resources of America -- the sturdy independence of our citizen; it could ultimately cost our people their liberty.

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I believe that responsibility or self-discipline, balance, common sense and faith in the individual and locality are indispensable to the perpetuation and functioning of self-government.

One imbalance, always to be fought, is monopoly, a continuing menace to our free system. It is bad when unwisely exercised by gigantic, centralized government or big business. It is equally bad if irresponsibly exercised by organized labor. Monopoly is a result of lack of balance and common sense.

Inflation is bad. It is bad whether generated by spendthrift government or by industrial price abuses. It is no less bad if caused by unjustified wage increases, or by demands of self-preserving pressure groups. One of its sources is a lack of a sense of responsibility.

The unending drive for Federal domination of the nation's power and water resources, and the ever increasing Federal involvement in urban problems, agriculture, housing, care of the youth and the aged, the ill and the poor, and the temporarily unemployed, can end only -- if unchecked -- in a dangerous centralization of power. Continued, this tendency will ultimately destroy the will and the ability of the individual and community to govern themselves. But it can be stopped in its tracks by balance and by faith in the individual and the locality.

If we believe these things then let us not divide or weaken ourselves by the use of such self-imposed and misleading labels as "conservative" and "liberal".

I suspect that more conservative and liberal blood has been shed over attempted definitions of these political terms than over any public policy or program.

Political labels will not influence thinking citizens.

America wants progress of a kind that is consistent with our traditions, our ideals and our free institutions. We do not want the so-called "progress" typified by credit-card government which bills our children for our profligacy, or which is measured in rubber dollars.

Consequently, when we choose political leaders, let this be our yardstick -- faith in the individual -- faith in the ability of each American citizen to run his own life and spend his own money better than some beaurocrat can manage either for him. If we are disciples of this simple faith, then any doctrinal differences among the Nixons, Rockefellers and G oldwaters -- all respected leaders in the Republican Party -- are as ripples in a cup of tea when compared to the hurricane type of towering waves of conflict that create the cleavages between the factions and divisions of the Party now in power.

Note the unbridgable differences between the Congress and the Administration on lavish proposals for federal aid to education, on back door financing, and other projects. Even worse is the total lack of any administration recommendation to the Congress for balancing the Federal budget, and for civil rights legislation, both solemnly pledged in platform and campaign only a few months ago.

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For our part let us agree to discard the tired and divisive political slogans of yesterday in favor of a common effort to keep our nation not just moving forward, but moving responsibly forward -- always attentive to human need beyond the power of the individual or locality to meet, faithful to the public trust in expending our citizen's funds, and devoted to our constitutional processes. What are we striving

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for is the kind of program for America that can endure because it is responsibly and sensibly achieved.

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My friends, with us tonight is at least one citizen who holds such views -- Everett Dirksen.

In recent years, as the Minority Leader of the Senate, time and time again he has stood at my side, undeterred by criticism, to do what the national interest has required.

In matters concerning our nation's security, he is informed, tireless, and absolutely non-partisan. Yet, when so doing will strengthen our country, he is unhesitating in voicing criticism and in fighting for constructive measures.

In domestic concerns, Senator Dirksen is daily the advocate of the responsible progress which I have roughly outlined tonight.

As a parliamentary tactician, he is unsurpassed.

Few people are as widely beloved, and in my White House years, I never heard Senator Dirksen speak meanly of another person.

My friends, it is knowledge of these things, personally experienced, that has brought me to Chicago tonight.

Proud of his service to our country -- grateful for his personal loyalties -- admiring his ability and character -- prizing his friendship -- I join the people of this state in saluting a great leader of the United States Senate, the statesman from Illinois -- Everett Dirksen.

Thank you very much.

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